MAKARA SANKRANTHI

(Concept – Significance – Customs & Traditions…)

In general Makara Sankranthi festival is celebrated for three days especially in South India;

- first day called Bhogi
- second day Makara Sankranthi and
- third day as Kanuma.

BHOGI...

The word Bhogi is derived from Sanskrit word Bhog meaning enjoying or experiencing. It is a festival that signifies the beginning of the harvest season for farmers in India. Hence, it is also known as harvest festival. Bhogi is considered as the day that facilitates the farmers to enjoy the fruits of their hard work.

On the day of Bhogi, old, worn out and useless items are burnt in a bonfire. Bhogi signifies cleansing of the mind of its ill thoughts and feelings, while symbolically burning them up,

with a firm resolve to tread the path of love, with truth and purity from this holy day onwards.

May the heat of the fire remind us of the brilliant life-giving warmth of the sun!
May tonight be the time to cast away darkness and decay, and embrace a bright new morning!

In Madhva sampradaya there is a tradition of giving MARADA BAAGINA on the day of BHOGI festival - this is given to/by Sumangali Stree. Items that are kept may vary according to local customs and one's sampradaya. Here is a Kannada version of the items and the significance of Marada Baagina.

ಭೋಗಿ ಹಬ್ಬಕ್ಕೆ ಮರದ ಬಾಗಿಣದಲ್ಲಿ ಇಡಬೇಕಾದ ಸಾಮಾನುಗಳು.

೧. ಅಕ್ಕಿ
೨. ಹೆಸರು ಬೇಳೆ
೩. ಕಡಲೆ ಬೇಳೆ
೪. ಉದ್ದಿನ ಬೇಳೆ
೫. ತೊಗರೆ ಬೇಳೆ
೬. ಸಜ್ಜೆ ಹಿಟ್ಟು
೭. ಎಳ್ಳು
೮. ಉಪ್ಪು
೯. ಹುಣಸಿಹಣ್ಣು
೧೦. ಹತ್ತಿ(ದೇವರದೀಪದ ಬತ್ತಿಗಳು)
೧೧. ಹಸಿರು ಕಡಲೆ ಗಿಡ
೧೨. ಕಬ್ಬು
೧೩. ಅವರೆಕಾಯಿ
೧೪. ಕೆಂಪು ಕುಂಬಳಕಾಯಿ
೧೫. ಬೆಲ್ಲ
೧೬. ದನಿಯಾ
೧೭. ಜೀರಿಗೆ
೧೮. ಲವಂಗ

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೧೯. ಮೆಣಸು

೨೦. ಇಂಗು

೨೧. ಕೆಂಪು ಒಣಮೆಣಸಿನಕಾಯಿ

೨೨. ಅಡುಗೆಗೆ ಉಪಯೋಗಿಸುವ ಎಣ್ಣೆ

೨೩. ಬೆಣ್ಣೆ

೨೪. ತುಪ್ಪ

೨೫. ತೆಂಗಿನೆಣ್ಣೆ

೨೬. ಸೀಗೆಪುಡಿ

೨೭. ಒಣಖೊಬ್ರಿ

೨೮. ಅರಿಷಿಣ ಕುಂಕುಮ

೨೯. ಹಾಲು

೩೦. ಮೊಸರು

೩೧. ನಿಷಿದ್ಧವಲ್ಲದ ಹಣ್ಣುಗಳು

೩೨. ೫ ವಿಳೆಯದೆಲೆ ಅಡಿಕೆ ದಕ್ಷಿಣೆ

೩೩. ಮರ ೧ ಜೊತೆ

೩೪. ಮುತ್ತೈದೆಯ ಸಾಮಾನುಗಳು (ಬಿಚ್ಚೋಲೆ ಕರಿಮಣಿ, ಬ್ಲೌಸ ಪೀಸ, ಕನ್ನಡಿ, ಬಾಚಣಿಕೆ,ಬಳೆ ಕಾಡಿಗೆ)

೩೫. ಉತ್ತರ ಕರ್ನಾಟಕದ ಕಡೆಗೆ ಗಜ್ಜರಿ (ಕ್ಯಾರೆಟ್) ಬದನೆಕಾಯಿ ಇಡುತ್ತಾರೆ. (ಕಪ್ಪು ಬಣ್ಣದ ಬದನೆಯಿಂದ ಪೀಡಾ ಪರಿಹಾರ ಮತ್ತು ದೃಷ್ಟಿದೊಷದ ಪರಿಹಾರವಾಗುತ್ತದೆ ಎಂದು ಪ್ರತೀತಿ)

ಮೊರದ ಬಾಗಿಣವನ್ನು ಮೊರದಲ್ಲಿ ಇಡುವ ಕ್ರಮ – ಮೊರದ ಎಡ ಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ ಅಕ್ಕಿ, ಬಲ ಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ ಬೆಲ್ಲ ಅಥವಾ ಸಕ್ಕರೆ,

ಅದರಮೇಲೆ ಬೇಳೆಗಳು, ಅದರಮೇಲೆ ಜೀರಿಗೆ , ದನಿಯಾ, ಇಂಗು, ಇತ್ಯಾದಿ ಉಪ್ಪನ್ನು ಮೇಲಿನ ಎಡಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿ ಇಡಬೇಕು. ಸೌಭಾಗ್ಯದವಸ್ತುಗಳು ಮತ್ತು ತರಕಾರಿಗಳನ್ನು ಉಪ್ಪಿನ ಕೆಳಗೆ ಇಡಬೇಕು. ಈ ಎಲ್ಲ ವಸ್ತುಗಳನ್ನು ತುಂಬಿದ ಮೊರದ ಮೇಲೆ ಇನ್ನೊಂದು ಮೊರವನ್ನು ಬೋರಲು ಹಾಕಬೇಕು (ಇನ್ನೊಂದು ಮೊರದಿಂದ ಮುಚ್ಚಬೇಕು.) ಅದರ ಮೇಲೆ ಕೆಮ್ಮಣ್ಣು ಸುಣ್ಣದಿಂದ X ಬರೆಯ ಬೇಕು. ಅರಿಷಿಣ ಕುಂಕುಮ ಹಚ್ಚಿ ಗೆಜ್ಜೆವಸ್ತ್ರ ಏರಿಸಿ ವಿಳಿದೆಲೆ ಅಡಿಕೆ ದಕ್ಷಿಣೆ, ಬ್ಲೌಸ ಬಟ್ಟೆ , ಹಣ್ಣು, ದಕ್ಷಿಣೆ ಇಟ್ಟು ದೇವರ ಮುಂದೆ ಇಟ್ಟು ದೀಪವನ್ನು ಹಚ್ಚಿ ದೇವರಿಗೆ ಸಮರ್ಪಣೆ ಮಾಡಿ ನಂತರ ಮುತ್ತೈದೆಯನ್ನು ಪೂರ್ವಾಭಿಮುಖವಾಗಿ ದೇವರ ಮುಂದೆ ಮಣೆ ಹಾಕಿ ಕುಳ್ಳಿರಿಸಿ ಗೌರಿ ಅಥವಾ ಲಕ್ಷ್ಮಿ ದೇವಿಯನ್ನು ಮಂತ್ರಾಕ್ಷತೆಯ ಮೂಲಕ ಮುತ್ತೈದೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅಹ್ವಾಹನೆ ಮಾಡಬೇಕು. ಮುತ್ತೈದೆಯ ಕಾಲುಗಳನ್ನು ಅರಿಷಿಣ ಹಚ್ಚಿ ಬಿಸಿ ನೀರಿನಿಂದ ತೊಳೆದು, ಕುಂಕುಮವನ್ನು ಕೊಟ್ಟು ಗಂಧವನ್ನು ಹಚ್ಚಿ ಮುತ್ತೈದೆಯ ತಲೆಗೆ ಎಣ್ಣೆ ಹಚ್ಚಿ ತಲೆಗೂದಲು ಬಾಚಿ(ಹಿಕ್ಕಿ), ಮುಡಿಯಲು ಹೂವನ್ನು ಕೊಟ್ಟು, ಕಣ್ಣಿಗೆ ಕಾಡಿಗೆ ಹಚ್ಚಿ ಕನ್ನಡಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅವರ ಮುಖವನ್ನು ತೋರಿಸಿ ಅವರ ಮುಂದೆ ದೀಪವನ್ನು ಹಚ್ಚಿಟ್ಟು, ಎಲೆಅಡಿಕೆ ದಕ್ಷಿಣೆ ಕಾಯಿ ಹಣ್ಣು ವಸ್ತ್ರವನ್ನು ಕೊಟ್ಟು ಮುತ್ತೈದೆಯ ಸೆರಗು ಮತ್ತೆ ನಿಮ್ಮ ಸೆರಗು ಮುಚ್ಚಿದ ಮೊರದ ಮೇಲೆ ಹರಡಿ ಮೂರು ಬಾರಿ ತೂಗಿಸಿದ ನಂತರ ದಾನ ಮಾಡ ಬೇಕು. ದಾನ ಕೊಟ್ಟ ನಂತರ ಮುಚ್ಚಿರುವ ಮೊರವನ್ನು ತೆಗೆದು ತೋರಿಸ ಬೇಕು. ಮೊರವನ್ನು ತೂಗುವಾಗ ಕನ್ನಡದಲ್ಲಿ ಹೇಳುವಾಗ " ಮುತ್ತೈದೆ

ಮುತ್ತೈದೆ ದಾನ ತೆಗೆದುಕೊ" ಅಂತ ಹೇಳ ಬೇಕು.
ತೆಗೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳುವವರು "ಮುತ್ತೈದೆ ಮುತ್ತೈದೆ ದಾನ ಕೊಡು" ಅಂತ ಹೇಳಬೇಕು.

ಮೊರದ ಬಾಗಿಣವನ್ನು ಕೊಡುವವರು ಹೇಳುವ ಮಂತ್ರ

ರಾಮಪತ್ನಿ ಮಹಾಭಾಗೇ ಪುಣ್ಯ ಮೂರ್ತಿ ನಿರಾಮಯೇ ।
ಮಯಾದತ್ತಾನಿ ಶೂರ್ಪಾಣಿ ತ್ವಯಾ ಸ್ವೀಕೃತಾ ಜಾನಕಿ ॥

ಮೊರದ ಬಾಗಿಣವನ್ನು ತೆಗೆದುಕೊಳ್ಳುವಾಗ ಹೇಳುವ ಮಂತ್ರ

ರಾಮ ಪತ್ನಿ ಮಹಾಭಾಗೇ ಪುಣ್ಯಮೂರ್ತಿ ನಿರಾಮಯೇ ।
ತ್ವಯಾ ದತ್ತಾನಿ ಶೂರ್ಪಾಣಿ ಮಯಾ ಸ್ವೀಕೃತಾ ಜಾನಕಿ ॥

ಬಾಗಿಣದ ಅರ್ಥ – ೧. ಮೊರವನ್ನು ಬಿದಿರಿನಿಂದ ಮಾಡಿರುತ್ತಾರೆ. ಮೊರದಲ್ಲಿ ಹೆಣೆದಿರುವ ಬಿದಿರು ನಮ್ಮ ವಂಶದ ಸಂಕೇತ. ಆದ್ದರಿಂದ ಮೊರದ ಯಾವ ಭಾಗದಲ್ಲಿಯೂ ತುಂಡಾಗಿರಬಾರದು. ನಮ್ಮ ಮುಂದಿನ ಮೂರು ಪೀಳಿಗೆಯಲ್ಲಿ (ಮಕ್ಕಳು, ಮೊಮ್ಮಕ್ಕಳು, ಮರಿಮಕ್ಕಳು) ಮಕ್ಕಳನ್ನು ತೂಗುವ ಭಾಗ್ಯ ಬರಲೆಂದು ಮೂರುಬಾರಿ ಮೊರವನ್ನು ತೂಗಿಸುವುದು. ತುಂಡಾದ ಮೊರದಿಂದ ತೂಗಿದರೆ ಮುಂದಿನ ಪೀಳಿಗೆಯವರು ಸಂತಾನ ಹೀನರಾಗುತ್ತಾರೆ.

೨. ಮೊರದ ಮೇಲೆ ಸೆರಗನ್ನು ಹಾಕುವದರ ಉದ್ದೇಶ – ಸ್ತ್ರೀಯರು ಸೆರಗು ಸೌಭಾಗ್ಯದ ಸಂಕೇತ. ನಮ್ಮ ಎದುರಿನಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಮುತ್ತೈದೆಯಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಮುತ್ತೈದೆತನವನ್ನು ನಮಗೂ ಅನುಗ್ರಹಿಸು ಅಂತ ಕೇಳಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವದು.

೩. **ದೀಪವನ್ನು ಹಚ್ಚುವ ಉದ್ದೇಶ**– ನಮ್ಮ ವಂಶದಲ್ಲಿ ಸಜ್ಜನರ ಜನನವಾಗಲಿ ಅನ್ನುವ ಉದ್ದೇಶ.

ಮೊರದ ಬಾಗಿಣವನ್ನು ಕೊಡುವುದರಿಂದ ಸೌಭಾಗ್ಯ, ವಂಶೋದ್ಧಾರ, ಧನ ಧಾನ್ಯದ ಸಮೃದ್ಧಿ ಆಗುತ್ತದೆ.

॥ ನಾಹಂ ಕರ್ತಾ ಹರಿಃ ಕರ್ತಾ ॥
॥ ಶ್ರೀಕೃಷ್ಣಾರ್ಪಣಮಸ್ತು॥

Bhogi is the last day of Dhanurmasam and also Dakshinaayana. Bhogi marks the beginning of three-day Makara Sankranthi festival.

SANKRANTHI…

It is a confluence of two words SAN + KRANTHI. SAN means plenty, good and come together. Kranthi means radical change. Sankranthi means plenty of good change. SANKRAMANA means to begin to move.

A solar month in Hindu calendar refers to the time required by the Sun to pass through one zodiac sign that consists of 30 sittings and 30 settings of the Sun.

There are 12 zodiac signs starting from Mesha (Aries) to Meena (Pisces) and Sun moves one degree in a day of 24 hours and one zodiac (house) in a month as we observe from the earth.

The time when Sun leaves one sign and enters another sign is known as Sankranthi or Sankramana or astrologically it is called transit.

The sign in which travel of Sun commences is the name given to that Sankranthi.

There are 12 Sankranthis' (Sun's transit) in a year starting from Mesha Sankranthi to Meena Sankranthi and the travel of Sun into Makara Raasi is known as Makara Sankranthi. It is holier than all the other Sankranthis' that occur in the Hindu calendar year.

Transit of Sun (Solar Transit) is generally not considered auspicious as there will be certain disturbances in the organization of solar forces and such times are generally not recommended for commencement of any good work.

On the contrary they are held to be auspicious for meditation, initiation into secret mantras and performance of certain religious rites which are held to purify both the body as well as the soul.

Transit or Sankramana of Sun into Makara raasi (Capricorn) of the zodiac is called MAKARA SANKRANTHI or MAKARA SANKRAMANA.

Every month transit of Sun takes place but, when he transits into Makara raasi it is considered as highly sacred, celestial and celebrated as a festival.

This is due to the importance attached to the coincidence of transit of Sun into Makara Raasi and His travel towards UttaraAyana around which time Sun will be directly over the tropic of Capricorn.

Basically, Makara Sankranthi is a Sun centric festival celebrated throughout the country irrespective of caste and creed.

It is a festival of peace, prosperity, harmony, happiness, and a festival indicating change for the good and betterment.

Makara Sankranthi reminds us to pray Lord Surya Narayana for health, peace, prosperity, and happiness of the humanity and for the divine knowledge > Gnaana+Bhakti+Vairagya....

Makara Sankranthi is basically a festival to promote love and harmony in the family and to instill their duty towards the Divinity.

CUSTOMS & TRADITIONS OF MAKARA SANKRANTHI FESTIVAL

[Significance of some of the objects (items) used for the festival]

Thila (Sesame):

According to sacred scripts Thila is highly sacred as it has surfaced from the body of Lord Vishnu. It is a grain related to Saturn (Shani). Makara Sankramana is an event that occurs in Makara raasi which is owned by Saturn.

This event occurs in Pushya Maasa as per lunar calendar when Moon will be in the constellation of Pushyami on the full moon day. Saturn is the star lord of Pushyami Nakshathra.

Sun is father of Saturn and the event (transit of Sun into Makara raasi) indicates visit of father to the son’s house.

Shat-Thila karma is prescribed on the day of Makara Sankramana by usage of Thila in six ways viz...

- Thila Snana
- Thila Deepa
- Thila Homa
- Thila tharpana
- Thila Dana and
- Thila Bhakshana

Usage of Thila on this day has acquired lot of spiritual, religious and health significance. Due to the significance given to Thila (sesame) usage during this festival it is also called as Thila Sankranthi.

Sugar Cane/Jaggery:

Sugarcane is hard and has many knots, but when it is crushed it gives a very good and sweet juice which is converted into jaggery. This is to give a message that life is full of difficulties, when it is overcome you enjoy the bliss of Divinity.

On Sankranthi day Thila + Jaggery is exchanged among the family members, friends and relatives. Eating of these two items has health significance also.

Pumpkin:

Among the vegetables Pumpkin is the largest in size that resembles large heartedness which can be preserved for a long period. It is used on this day meaning, an offering of one's virtues.

Cow dung:

In olden days and even now in villages we observe people using Cow dung mixed with water and sprinkle it in front of the

house. It is considered as a symbol of health that helps in destroying the bacteria in the atmosphere.

To resemble this, even today during these festival days we observe placing of three cow dung balls with flowers on top of it in front of the house.

The religious significance of these three cow dung balls is that they symbolically represent Lord Sri Krishna, Goverdhanagiri, and the Cow; thereby indicating that all the three are to be worshiped on this occasion.

Makara Sankranthi is not a festival of one state alone; rather it is celebrated across the country, even in South East Asiatic Countries irrespective of caste and creed.

Depending on the cultural and traditional background of each region the festival is celebrated in different ways at different places.

It is also considered as beginning of a new year that usually falls in middle of January. It is known as Pongal festival in Tamil Nadu. In Gujarat it is celebrated as a Kite flying day.

In the temple town of Udupi, the seat of Sri Madhvacharya (founder of Dvaita/Tattvavaada Philosophy) the festival of Makara Sankramana has attained lot of significance. The idol of Lord Sri Krishna (Bala Krishna) at Udupi temple was installed by Sri Madhvacharya on the day of Makara Sankramana. Famous hymn Sri DwadAsa stotHra composed by SriMadAacHaryaru took birth on this sacred day of Makara Sankranthi.

Once in two years around this time a ritual called PARYAAYA is held. This is to indicate the change of seat of power among the Heads of eight Mutts to perform and administer the famous

temple of Lord Sri Krishna at Udupi. Lots of people across the country gather together on this occasion to witness the rituals.

Bathing festival and religious fair called Magha Mela begins on this day at Prayaaga (Allahabad). It is said that while carrying the nectar pot (Amrita Kalasa) by Lord Vishnu, few drops of nectar fell at Allahabad (Prayaaga), Haridwar, Nasik, and Ujjain.

These holy places (Theerthas) have acquired significant reputation where human beings could wash their sins by way of sacred bath at these places. Taking bath at these places on the day of Makara Sankranthi has attained lot of spiritual significance and is highly meritorious.

Since time immemorial human kind is accustomed to co-relate the cosmic events with individual life. Sun is an important cosmic body and every Sun-centric event has lot of spiritual, religious and cultural value.

Message from Makara-Sankranthi festival…

Bhogi festival signifies cleansing of mind of its ill thoughts and feelings, while symbolically burning them up with a firm resolve to tread the path of love with truth and purity from this holy day onwards...

Makara Sankranthi is a Sun centric festival. Sun promotes in human beings their physical, mental and spiritual abilities. Sun grants individuality and will power. He is the destroyer of darkness, sins and afflictions.

Sankranthi is a confluence of two words SAN + KRANTHI. SAN means plenty, good and come together. Kranthi means radical change. Sankranthi means plenty of good change.

Basically, it is a festival to promote love and harmony in the family and to instill their duty towards the Divinity.

Kanuma is celebrated as a thanks giving festival of Cattle who is worshiped on this day for their help to the farmers in their agriculture production.

Overall, Makara Sankranthi conveys a message...

"let actions & thoughts be good to experience the Divine Bliss"

Makara Sankranthi is a festival of peace; prosperity; happiness and transformation (change) for betterment.

"Parivarthan Hi Samsaar Ka Niyam Hai"
(change is the Law of the Universe)

Makara Sankranti: Significance of Makara

Makara Sankranthi is the festival that marks the Sun's transit into the zodiac sign of **Makara Rashi** (Capricorn). Makara is a Sanskrit word that generally means a Crocodile/Shark.

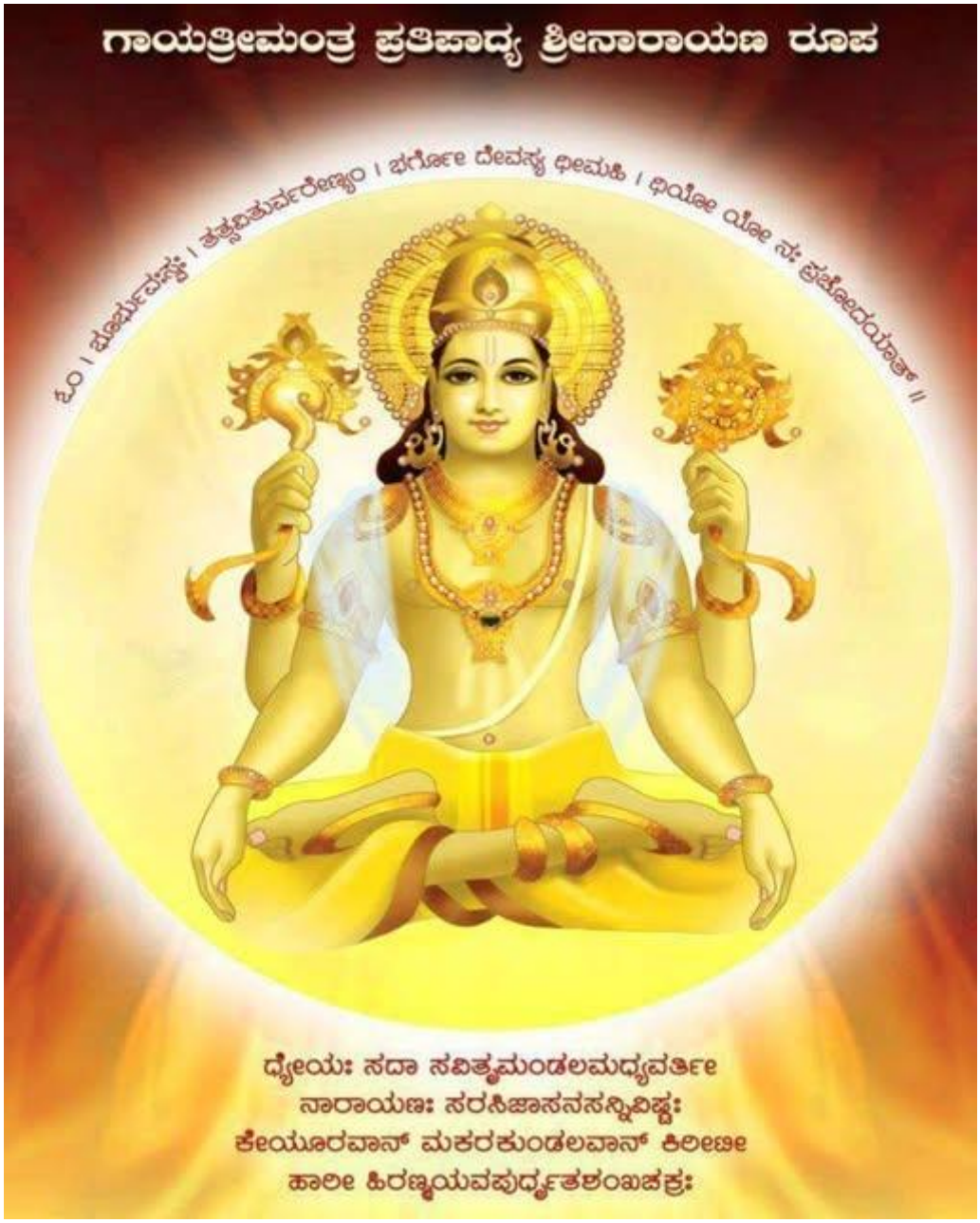
Makara is referred to a sign in the zodiac known as Capricorn. It is said to be the most sacred sign among the 12 *raasis*. It is the 10th sign in the zodiac. This transition marks the start of **Uttarayana**, a period associated with spiritual awakening and the "Day of the Devas".

Significance of Makara envisaged from the dhyana sloka

ध्येयः सदा सवितृमण्डलमध्यवर्ती
नारायणः सरसिजासनसन्निविष्टः |
केयूरवान् मकरकुण्डलवान् किरीटी
हारी हिरण्मयवपुर्धृतशङ्खचक्रः ||

ಧ್ಯೇಯಃ ಸದಾ ಸವಿತೃಮಣ್ಡಲಮಧ್ಯವರ್ತೀ
ನಾರಾಯಣಃ ಸರಸಿಜಾಸನಸನ್ನಿವಿಷ್ಟಃ |
ಕೇಯೂರವಾನ್ ಮಕರಕುಣ್ಡಲವಾನ್ ಕಿರೀಟೀ
ಹಾರೀ ಹಿರಣ್ಮಯವಪುರ್ಧೃತಶಙ್ಖಚಕ್ರಃ ||

ధ్యేయః సదా సవితృమణ్డలమధ్యవర్తీ
నారాయణః సరసిజాసనసన్నివిష్టః |
కేయూరవాన్ మకరకుణ్డలవాన్ కిరీటీ
హారీ హిరణ్మయవపుర్ధృతశఙ్ఖచక్రః ||



dhyeyaḥ sadā savitṛmaṇḍalamadhyavartī
nārāyaṇaḥ sarasijāsanasannivisṭaḥ |
keyūravān makarakuṇḍalavān kirīṭī
hārī hiraṇmayavapurdhṛtaśaṅkhacakraḥ ||

This *shloka* describes how to pray (*anusandhana*) / contemplate Lord Vishnu in the form of Surya Narayana:

Meaning:

One should always meditate upon Lord Narayana, who dwells in the center of the solar orb (*Savitru-mandala-madhyavarti*). He is seated upon a lotus flower (*Sarasijasana*), adorned with golden armlets (*Keyuravan*), a magnificent crown (*Kiriti*), and shark-shaped earrings (*Makara-kundalavan*). His complexion is of a brilliant golden hue (*Hiranmaya-vapu*), and he holds the sacred conch (*Shankha*) and the divine discus (*Chakra*) in his hands.

He (Lord Vishnu), as the Primordial person giving *darshan* from the center of Surya (*Savithru*) Mandala (Sun's Globe), is seated on a lotus, with golden bracelets, wearing a crown, and shark shaped earrings (*Makara Kundala*); golden in complexion, holding Shankha and Chakra in his hands.

The significance of Makara can also be envisaged from the above *shloka* that we usually recite during *Sandhyavandana*. While worshiping Sun God/performing *Gayathri Japa*, one should always contemplate/meditate (*anusandhana*) this form of Lord Sri ManNarayana who alone is the cause of Sun's shining and the source of Sun's rays. This *shloka* emphasizes that Lord Narayana is the *Antaryami* (Inner Controller) of the Sun. While the Sun provides physical light to the world, it is the spiritual potency of Narayana that empowers the Sun to shine.

Traditionally, the shark or alligator in Hindu iconography represents the powerful, sometimes turbulent forces of the mind and desires. By wearing the Makara as an ornament (*Makara Kundala*), Lord Narayana symbolizes total mastery over these cosmic and internal forces. The Makara Kundalas (shark-shaped earrings) symbolize his lordship over the vast, infinite waters of the cosmic ocean and the zodiac's transition into Makara Rashi.

In Vishnu-related temples, we generally observe an arch-like structure erected or built known as Makara Thoranam (an archway adorned with Makara motifs).

Makara Thoranam (or Makara Torana) is a distinctive architectural and ornamental arch found in Hindu and Buddhist temples across Asia. It is most prominently featured above the entrance to the Garbhagriha (sanctum sanctorum) or framing the primary deity in the form of a Prabhavali (sacred halo arch).

In Vaishnava temples, the Makara Thoranam often depicts the Dashavatara (ten incarnations) along its curve, with Lord Vishnu and Goddess Lakshmi featured at the center.

Several significant events related to Lord Vishnu occur in this celestial region:

Sravana Nakshatra whose star Deity is Lord Vishnu falls in the zodiac sign Makara. It is said that Lord Brahma had *darshan* of Lord Vishnu for the first time at the beginning of creation in the constellation of Sravana Nakshathra.

Lord Vishnu incarnated as Vamana in the constellation of Sravana which is in Makara *raasi*.

Lord Vishnu (Srinivasa) stepped His foot on sacred Tirumala Hills in Sravana star.

It is said that when the Sun during his transit in Makara Rashi comes opposite to Sravana star the doors of Vaikunta (*Moksha Dwara*) get opened during Uttarayana the very reason Bhishma Pitamaha waited for this moment to leave his body.

UTTARAAYANA (Makara Sankramana)

[Concept - Significance - ParvakaAla - ShatThila Karma]

Concept of Uttaraayana

In Hindu calendar, year is broadly divided into two periods called Aayanas having duration of six months each that indicates the direction of the Sun. They are referred to as Uttarayana and Dakshinaayana.

All spiritual and religious activities in Hindu religion take place during these two Sun centric periods. Sun is the focal point and the movement or transit of Sun around the zodiac forms the basis for deciding a particular season or a month etc.

Travel of Sun in the zodiac starting from Makara (Capricorn) raasi to Mithuna raasi (Gemini) is known as Uttaraayana or northward journey.

Similarly travel of Sun from Karkataka raasi (Cancer) to Dhanus raasi (Sagittarius) is called as Dakshinaayana or southward journey.

Uttaraayana is a confluence of two words;

UTTARA+AAYANA.

Uttara means North and Aayana mean travel or journey.

Uttaraayana means the travel of Sun towards the North.

Zodiacally when Sun enters into Makara Raasi, Uttaraayana (as per the calendar that is being followed in South India) begins and this moment of transit is called Uttaraayana Parva Punya Kala considered as holy and celestial.

What is a Parvakaala?

Vedic meaning of Parva is said to be a knot; a confluence; a celebration etc. Based on the meanings; the time of confluence of two periods is called Parvakaala.

Accordingly, the time of confluence (Sandhi) of two seasons Dakshinaayana and Uttaraayana is considered to be holy, auspicious and celestial and it is known as Parva Punya Kaala.

Uttaraayana Parvakaala

Bhogi and Makara Sankramana (Makara Sankranthi) are Sun-centric festivals associated with the exit of Sun from Dhanus Raasi (Sagittarius) and entry (transit) into Makara Raasi (Capricorn) in the zodiac.

In general, every year the calendar dates for Bhogi & Makara Sankranthi (Makara Sankramana) festival falls on 13th & 14th January and the day of Makara Sankramana marks the beginning of Uttaraayana (as per South Indian Calendar).

A day before Makara Sankramana marks the last day of the solar month Dhanurmasam that is celebrated as Bhogi festival that generally falls on 13th January.

Generally, Parvakaala (meritorious time) of Uttaraayana is observed on the day of Makara Sankramana ie. 14th January

provided,transit (Sankramana) of Sun takes place before Sunset on that day.

How to reckon Parvakaala for Makara Sankramana?

Sacred scripts (Dharma Saastras) define Parva Punya kaala to be observed for each transit of Sun. Even Hindu Panchangas' also indicate the meritorious timings during a transit.

So far as Makara Sankramana is concerned; Dharma Sindhu indicates 40 Ghatis' (1 Ghati = 24 minutes) from the time of transit is considered as meritorious that is called Uttaraayana Parva Punya Kaala.

If the transit occurs after Sunset; five Ghatis' duration on the next day after Sunrise is considered as Parva- Kaala.

Accordingly, if Sun's transit in Makara raasi (Capricorn) takes place on 14th January after Sunset, Bhogi festival (last day of Dhanurmasam) will be observed on 14th January and Makara Sankramana (Makara Sankranthi) on the next day ie. 15th January.

Significance of Uttaraayana Parva Kaala

Uttarayana represents Devathas and Dakshinayana represents Pithrus and the significance is to seek the blessings of both at this transit time.

Uttaraayana is the day time and Dakshinaayana is the night time for Devathas. In this Universe it is said that, Vaikunta the abode of the Supreme God Vishnu is in the Northern direction (Uttara) and the time of movement of Sun in the direction of Vaikunta is believed to be incredibly celestial and sacred.

Bheeshma Pithamaha (Mahabharata fame) waited on his death bed for the onset of this celestial period Uttaraayana.

What is to be done during Uttarayana Parvakala?

During any Parvakaala sacred bath, prayer, japa, penance, tharpana, charity etc. are prescribed. If it is Uttaraayana then it will be more significant and more meritorious.

ShatThila Karma

ShatThila karma is prescribed on the day of Makara Sankramana by usage of Thila in six ways viz.

- Thila Snana
- Thila Deepa
- Thila Homa
- Thila tharpana
- Thila Dana and
- Thila Bhakshana

Usage of Thila on this day has acquired lot of spiritual, religious and health significance. Due to the significance given to Thila (sesame) usage during this festival it is also called as Thila Sankranthi.

Sarva Pithru Tharpana:

Those who are eligible should give Thila Tharpana to their forefathers (Sarva Pithru).

Tharpana should not be performed if Uttaraayana occurs on Ekaadasi day.

On the day of Makara Sankramana (Uttarayana), worshiping Lord SriManNarayana (Savithrunaamaka Lakshmi Narayana) is highly meritorious during this time.

Paaraayana (suggested during Parvakaala – Yatha shakti/yatha-yogyata)

- Sri Vishnu Sahasranama stothra,
- Sri Hari Vayu Stuthi,
- Aaditya Hridayam,
- Sri Raama Raksha Stothra;
- Sri RamaCharitrya Manjari;
- Gayathri Japa;
- Surya Dwadasanaama/Ashtottara;

DaAna

ThilaDana: Donating Thila (black sesame) on this day with dakshina is considered sacred and meritorious;

VasthraDana: As per Maasa dharma (Pushya Maasa) donating clothes to a Brahmin is prescribed during Uttaraayana Parvakaala.

KushmandaDana: Donating of Pumpkin on this day is also meritorious.

Sankramana (Sun's transit) is one of the elected days for performing Sri Sathyanarayana Swamy Vratha. If it is Makara Sankramana associated with Uttaraayana Parvakaala it will be highly meritorious.

On the day of Makara Sankramana (on the day dedicated to Sun God), one should desist from sensual pleasures, should not apply oil to the body/head.

अमिषं मधुपानं च यः करोति रवेर्दिने।

सप्तजन्मभवेत् रोगि जन्म जन्म दरिद्रता ॥

स्त्रीतैलमधुमांसानि ये त्यजन्ति रवेर्दिने ।

न व्याधि शोक दारिद्र्यं सूर्य लोकं च गच्छति ॥

ಅಮಿಷಂ ಮಧುಪಾನಂ ಚ ಯಃ ಕರೋತಿ ರವೇರ್ದಿನೇ|

ಸಪ್ತಜನ್ಮಭವೇತ್ ರೋಗಿ ಜನ್ಮ ಜನ್ಮ ದರಿದ್ರತಾ ||

ಸ್ತ್ರೀತೈಲಮಧುಮಾಂಸಾನಿ ಯೇ ತ್ಯಜನ್ತಿ ರವೇರ್ದಿನೇ |

ನ ವ್ಯಾಧಿ ಶೋಕ ದಾರಿದ್ರ್ಯಂ ಸೂರ್ಯ ಲೋಕಂ ಚ ಗಚ್ಛತಿ ||

అమిషం మధుపానం చ యః కరోతి రవేర్దినే|

సప్తజన్మభవేత్ రోగి జన్మ జన్మ దరిద్రతా ||

స్త్రీతైలమధుమాంసాని యే త్యజన్తి రవేర్దినే |

న వ్యాధి శోక దారిద్ర్యం సూర్య లోకం చ గచ్ఛతి ||

amiṣaṃ madhupānaṃ ca yaḥ karoti raverdine|
saptajanmabhavet rogi janma janma daridratā ||

strītailamadhumāṃsāni ye tyajanti raverdine |
na vyādhi śoka dāridryaṃ sūrya lokaṃ ca gacchati ||

One who consumes meat, intoxicating drink(s) on the day dedicated to SuryaBhagawan shall be born plagued with diseases in seven births and remain a daridra/miserable in every life.

One who ceases from intimacy with women, oil bath, meat, wine on the day dedicated to Sun God will never be touched by grief or poverty and attain the realm of SuryaDEva.

Aaditya Vaara - Sapthami thithi - Surya Sankramana day (all transit days of Surya) - Ratha Sapthami, Surya Shashti (Bhadrapada); are dedicated to SunGod.

Not only the above, during all Parvakaala/Parvadina one should desist from sensual pleasures.

In general transit of Sun is not considered as auspicious as there will be certain disturbances in organization of solar forces and generally such times are not recommended for any good work.

On the contrary they are held to be auspicious for meditation, initiation into sacred manthras; performance of certain religious rites etc. which are held to purify both the body and soul.

Sun is the most visible personification of the Supreme God on Earth and is called Prathyaksha Daivam Surya Narayana.

Sun directs our vision towards the holy and pure spirituality and guides us to dedicate our activities for a higher cause thus following the northward path.

During this period of Uttaraayana, Sun's power gradually increases and the day will be longer than night.

Since time immemorial human kind is accustomed to co-relate the cosmic events with individual life. Sun is an important cosmic body and every Sun-centric event has lot of spiritual, religious and cultural value.

Makara Sankranthi reminds us to pray Lord Surya Narayana for health, peace, prosperity, and happiness of the humanity and for the divine knowledge > Gnaana+Bhakti+Vairagya

Surya (Sun-God) is considered as the giver of Health – "Arogyam Bhaskaraddichhett" and SriManNaaraayana as the giver (one and the only) of Moksha "Moksham Naaraayanaaddhichhett".

श्री विष्णुं जगतां नाथं ज्ञान विज्ञान मोक्षदं ।

महापापहरं देवं तं सूर्यं प्रणमाम्यहं ।।

శ్రీ విష్ణుం జగతాం నాథం జ్ఞాన విజ్ఞాన మోక్షదం ।

మహాపాపహరం దేవం తం సూర్యం ప్రణమామ్యహం ।।

ಶ್ರೀ ವಿಷ್ಣುಂ ಜಗತಾಂ ನಾಥಂ ಜ್ಞಾನ ವಿಜ್ಞಾನ ಮೋಕ್ಷದಂ ।

ಮಹಾಪಾಪಹರಂ ದೇವಂ ತಂ ಸೂರ್ಯಂ ಪ್ರಣಮಾಮ್ಯಹಂ ।।

ശ്രീ വിഷ്ണും ജഗതാം നാഥം ജ്ഞാന വിജ്ഞാന മോക്ഷദം ।

മഹാപാപഹരം ദേവം തം സൂര്യം പ്രണമാമ്യഹം ।।

śrī viṣṇuṃ jagatāṃ nāthaṃ jñāna vijñāna mokṣadaṃ |
mahāpāpaharaṃ devaṃ taṃ sūryaṃ praṇamāmyahaṃ ||

While the Sun provides physical light to the world, it is the spiritual potency of SriManNarayana that empowers the Sun to shine. I bow to that Sun God, the antaryaami (inner controller) of Surya, the all-pervading Supreme Lord of the worlds (Universe), the one who bestows knowledge, wisdom, and liberation (Moksha) and who removes the greatest of sins, who is Vishnu the SriManNarayana - "Ravirvirochanah Suryah Savitaa RaviLochana"

आशास्महे नूतनहायनागमे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु जनाः सुशान्ताः ।
निरामयाः क्षोभविवर्जितास्सदा मुदा रमन्तां भगवत्कृपाश्रयाः ॥

भास्करस्य यथा तेजो मकरस्थस्य वर्धते।
तथैव भवतां तेजो वर्धतामिति कामये।।

ఆశాస్మహే నూతనహాయనాగమే భద్రాణి పశ్యన్తు జనాః సుశాన్తాః |
నిరామయాః క్షోభవివర్జితాస్సదా ముదా రమన్తాం భగవత్కృపాశ్రయాః ||

ಭಾಸ್ಕರಸ್ಯ ಯಥಾ ತೇಜೋ ಮಕರಸ್ಥಸ್ಯ ವರ್ಧತೇ|
ತಥೈವ ಭವತಾಂ ತೇಜೋ ವರ್ಧತಾಮಿತಿ ಕಾಮಯೇ||

ആശാസ്മഹേ നൂതനഹായനാഗമേ ഭദ്രാണി പശ്യന്തു ജനാഃ സുശാന്താഃ |
നിരാമയാഃ ക്ഷോഭവിവർജിതാസ്സദാ മുദാ രമന്താം ഭഗവത്കൃപാശ്രയാഃ ||

భాస్కరస్య యథా తేజో మకరస్థస్య వర్ధతే|
తథైవ భవతాం తేజో వర్ధతామితి కామయే||

āśāsmahe nūtanahāyanāgame bhadrāṇi paśyantu janāḥ suśāntāḥ |

nirāmayāḥ kṣobhavivarjitāssadā mudā ramantāṃ bhagavatkṛpāśrayāḥ ||

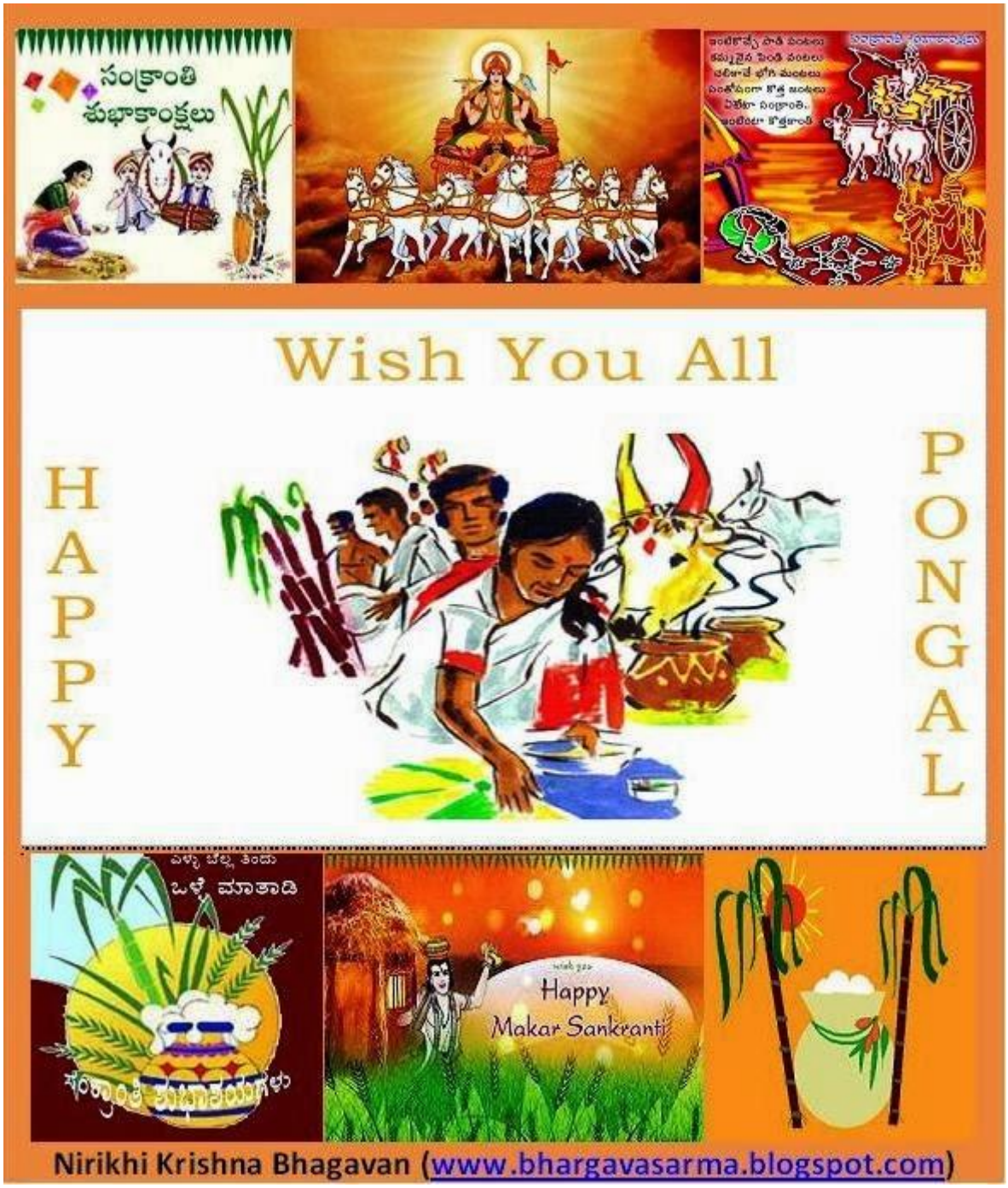
bhāskarasya yathā tejo makarasthasya vardhate|
tathaiva bhavatāṃ tejo vardhatāmiti kāmaye||

"With the arrival of the New Year, we hope that all people remain peaceful and see only auspicious things. May everyone remain free from disease and agitation, and always rejoice in happiness under the shelter of God's grace."

"Just as the radiance of the Sun increases as it enters the zodiac sign of Capricorn (Makar), I pray that your own brilliance and glory increase in the same way."

Sri KrishnaArpanamastu

naham karta harih karta



जपाकुसुमसंकाशं काश्यपेयं महाद्युतिम्

तमोरिं सर्वपापघ्नं प्रणतोस्मि दिवाकरम्

JapaKusumaSankaasham KaashyaPeyam MahaaDyutim
Tamorim SarvaPapaghnam Pranathosmi Divakaram